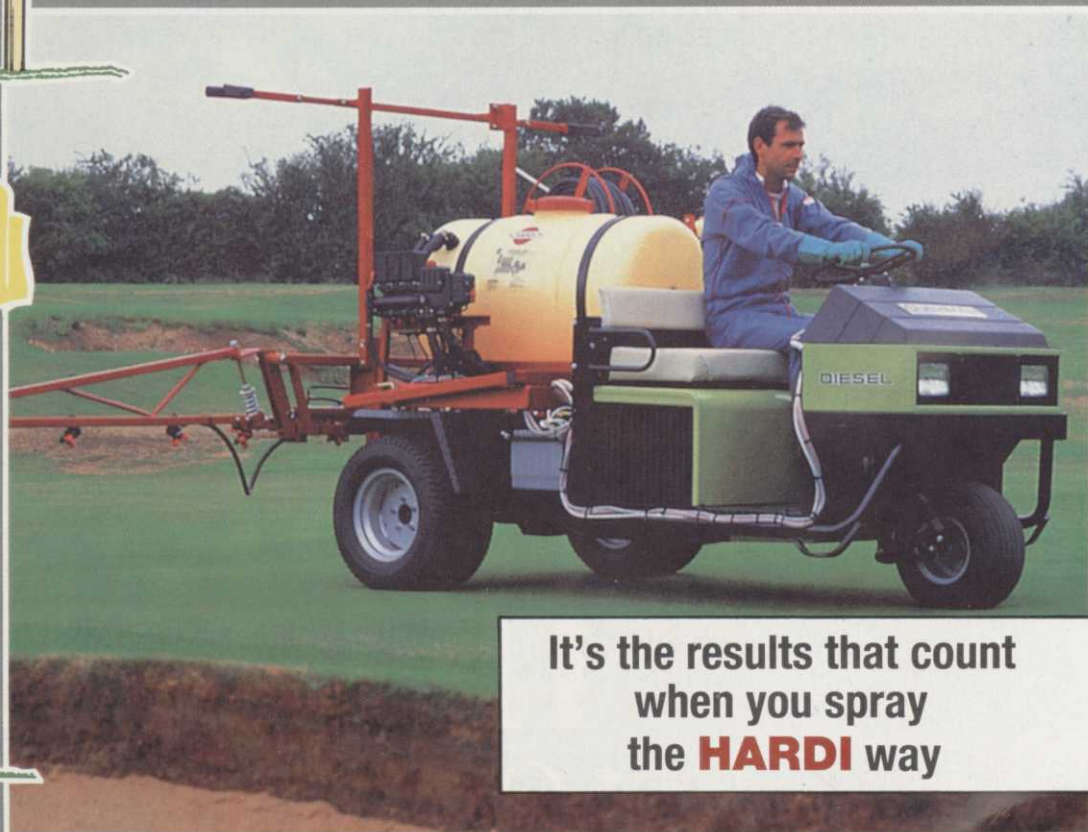


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JULY 1994

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For a BTME '95 information pack call Louise Lunn on 0347 838581 - quickly! The event is almost sold out...

Spring time – or stress time?

It's early April and spring is in the air. The nights are drawing out and the dark days of winter are but a fading memory. A time of optimism when greenkeepers sally forth with a new spring in their heels. Or is it? For many greenkeepers it's stress time once again. No sooner is the month under way than greenkeepers are confronted with their first major problem best summarised as the 'Augusta Syndrome'. As the last images of the Augusta Masters tournament fade from our TV screens the knocking brigade come into action. Suddenly the golf course which was in fine condition for the time of year only the previous week is now perceived as far from that when compared with the idyllic conditions prevailing at the Masters. Little heed of course is paid to such mundane matters as climatic conditions, maintenance budgets or greenstaff numbers. Winter is over and the course should be in mint condition.

The Chairman of the Green Committee is called into action. Surely it is time the greenkeeping staff were sorted out. It is cold, it is wet and the grass is not growing – but the Course Manager protesteth too much and in vain. Conditions must improve and they must improve rapidly. Yes, it's stress time. Less the reader thinks that the writer exaggerates then yet again this year reports have reached the office of greenkeepers throwing in the towel. This article is not about protecting the lazy, incompetent greenkeeper but it is a plea for a greater understanding and for a move away from the traditional 'spring madness'.

No doubt many of the problems revolve around communication and consultation and lack of knowledge on the part of members. The regular changing of green committee personnel does not help. Are all these problems insurmountable? I think not. Much can be achieved if the golf club adopts a positive attitude to greenkeeper training. The Course Manager's technical skills will be complemented by managerial and communication skills and he should be encouraged to keep members informed on course maintenance matters. I heard recently that one Course Manager, who for some years has been running an annual seminar for members, is now setting up



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

workshops for 20-25 members at a time on a rolling programme basis. Certainly more and more Course Managers are benefiting from a regular dialogue with members and this is a move in the right direction and to be very much encouraged.

Where a negative situation exists in a golf club and there is a lack of communication, it is all too easy for the Course Manager to become isolated and inward-looking – both within the club and indeed from his local BIGGA section where, if approached, caring fellow greenkeepers would be available to advise and help in instances where an individual is facing particular problems. Within the club this would seem to be the time when a sympathetic employer should seek to help the Course Manager whether the problem be an agronomic or personal one. Before acting precipitately wouldn't it be better for the employer to consult

and perhaps, if necessary, seek advice or guidance from BIGGA as the professional body representing their Course Manager's interests. Greenkeepers do not generally seek confrontation. They ask quite simply for consultation, consideration and understanding in carrying out a difficult job to the best of their ability and under increasingly complex rules and regulations, let alone bad weather, inadequate capital and maintenance budgets and too few staff. They do not seek to stand above criticism or deny their own foibles. However, they surely have a right to expect the employer to protect them from the diatribes of those small groups of ill-informed members whose knowledge of golf course management is at best scanty and at worst non-existent. Yet how easily can such members produce a career-threatening situation for the greenkeeper.

As we move through May and June as peak playing months the pressure is really on and perhaps these two months more than any others will determine whether the Course Manager's services are terminated or indeed whether he decides that he has had enough. I would venture to suggest that such pressure and the resultant stress is in no-one's best interests. As a result Course Managers who are highly competent are lost to golf clubs and maybe to greenkeeping. The golf club then has to seek a replacement and there are no guarantees that the new Course Manager will perform bet-

ter than the departing one within the resources made available to him and prevailing attitudes within the club. Indeed it may not be too long before the scenario repeats itself. So it could well be that the club will reflect on the loss of a good man in the course of quietening a few over-excited members who really needed no other antidote than a few low-scoring rounds of golf before declaring the golf course to be in the best condition they could remember.

So now it is July and hopefully for the survivors 'spring madness' is over for another year. For those who haven't made it one can only hope that there are better days ahead. Before we go full circle once again is it too much to hope that a new spirit will prevail? Is it too much to ask that clubs provide the wherewithal for greenkeepers to receive training in areas of identified weakness? Is it too much to ask that green committees show greater understanding and put their faith in their most important employee, the golf course manager, rather than interfere in matters where their knowledge is at best limited? Finally, is it too much to ask that meetings and workshops for golf club members are established to enable the Course Manager to disseminate information on the golf course – its maintenance and management? In some instances the answer may be yes on all counts but hope springs eternal and I am optimistic that a wind of change is beginning to blow. The grounds for such optimism emanate from the tremendous upsurge in the education and training programmes made available to greenkeepers in recent years and the increasing recognition within the game for the well-qualified, experienced and technically competent individual. Such individuals will be consulted and find that their advice is heeded and their maintenance programmes are sanctioned and implemented. The golfer, much to his delight, will come to appreciate the well-maintained golf course on which he can aspire to perform great deeds. All then is not lost and there must be a concerted effort on the part of golf club and greenkeeper to ensure that, in the course of time, the bad old days of 'spring madness' will become but a fading memory.

Golfing triumph for Emma, ex-BIGGA girl with ambition

There was great excitement recently in the office with the news of Emma Duggleby's triumph in the Ladies' British Amateur Championship. Many of you will recall that it is only just over a year ago that 22 year old Emma relinquished her position with BIGGA in order to pursue her golfing ambitions. Talking with her at the time, Emma was in a real quandary whether to chance her arm in the quest for golfing glory or to pursue a career with BIGGA. In deciding on the former, she must surely have exceeded her

wildest ambitions when, just over a year later, she has succeeded in winning golf's most coveted ladies' amateur title. Emma was a popular, unassuming member of staff whom we were very sorry to lose. However, we keep in touch and will follow her career with interest in a future which we hope will bring Curtis Cup honours and who knows in the years ahead perhaps she will tread in the footsteps of Nancy Lopez and Laura Davies. We all join in sending our congratulations and best wishes for the future.

BTME '95 set to reach capacity with 81% of space already sold

With seven months to go, 81% of the stand space at next year's BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition in Harrogate has been sold.

Many of this year's exhibitors were so impressed with the event that they have taken much larger sites in '95. These companies include Lely UK, Ransomes, Hardi Sprayers, Sharpes International, Kings Horticulture and Sisis.

New exhibitors include the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, which will help give the seventh BTME a more international flavour.

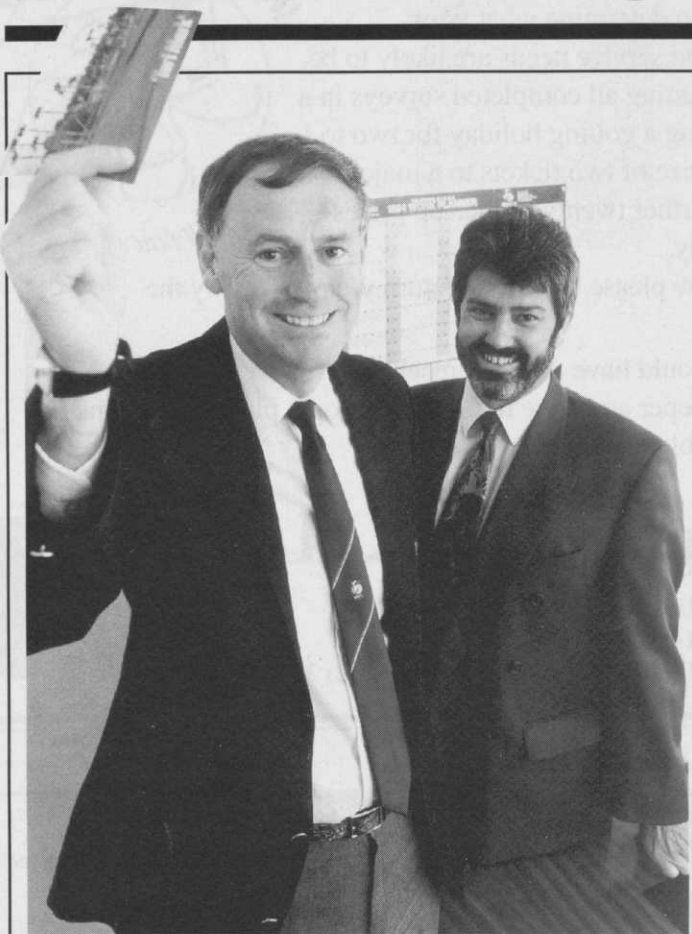
Bill Lynch, BIGGA's marketing manager, said: "The response has been overwhelming. More space had been taken and paid for by the end of May than we had sold by September last year. This, combined with the fact that we are restricting BTME to halls A, B and C to preserve the show's intimacy and the fact that we've lost a bit of space due to new fire regulations, means some manufacturers and distributors could be disappointed unless they book their space soon."

Britain's premier indoor turf management show will take place on January 25-27 in Harrogate's International Centre. For the first time, it will be preceded by BIGGA's National Education Conference rather than workshops. The highly-successful seminar programme will run as normal throughout the exhibition.

● Next issue, you could win an all-expenses paid trip to BTME – watch this space.

● Exhibition plan to date: Pages 42-43.

NEWS



Luck of the draw brings prize boost

A postcard from the edge of Effingham has saved the local golf course £1,000. Head greenkeeper Peter Broadbent was one of 2,000 UK and Irish greenkeepers sent a postcard from the USA to promote an improved formulation of ICI's Turf Mark. Greenkeepers were able to swap the card for a free sachet of the spray dye indicator, and the cards were entered into a draw for £1,000 worth of ICI Professional Products goodies. The draw was made at BIGGA's headquarters by executive director Neil Thomas, watched by ICI's Roger Mossop. The winner was Peter Broadbent of Effingham Golf Course.

David gets six of the best

David Eager, head greenkeeper at Northern Ireland's Blackwood Golf Course near Bangor has taken charge of six new Hayter machines – five Triple Greens Mowers (three complete with groomers and two with treaded front tyres and tees cutting heads) and a T44 fairway five-gang ride-on mower. "Being cut off from the mainstream of the UK trade has in the past restricted Northern Ireland greenkeepers to a limited choice of mowers," said David, "but I met Hayter at a number of trade shows and talked to their sales representative, Robin Boyes. He arranged a demonstration of their Greens Triple and T44. I liked what I saw..."

● David is pictured with greens assistant Jonathon Eager and David Johnston of Hayter dealer Cyril Johnston in Belfast.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ The Isles of Scilly's one and only greenkeeper, Peter Stringer, is off work at the moment thanking his lucky stars that he was wearing steel toe-capped boots. If he wasn't he could have lost his foot, according to doctors.

Peter, 64, was cutting the semi-rough at the nine-hole, 18 tees course. He stopped his old Massey Ferguson to move a seat, but as he was getting out the tractor began moving forward. Peter lost his balance and ended up under the tractor.

The gang mowers cut through the sole of one boot, badly gashing his foot and breaking two toes. "But if I hadn't been wearing my steel toe-capped boots, I'd have lost my foot," he said.

■ The Sports Turf Research Institute has promoted Stuart Ormondroyd to senior turfgrass agronomist.



Stuart joined the STRI in 1980 and has been specialising in golf since 1986, advising many courses in the north of England, Midlands and Ireland. He will continue with his existing duties (including lecturing) as well as assisting in the development and extension of the STRI's advisory service.

■ RPK Turfcare Supplies have appointed three new area reps. Former greenkeeper Peter Jordas will cover Surrey/Sussex, Harry Norman will handle Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire, and Jenny Waterfield will cover East Sussex and Kent. Tel: 0734 510251.

■ The British women's amateur champion is a former BIGGA employee. Emma Duggleby, 22, worked for the Association from September 1992 to March 1993 before quitting to try to 'make it' in the world of golf. Nobody, probably not even Emma, expected success to come quite so soon.

Just over a year after switching from greenkeeping to golfing matters, she beat 47-year-old Cecilia Mourgue D'Algue 3&1 in the final of the British Women's Championships at Newport.



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Picking a winner for The Open

"I wish we could play The Open here tomorrow," said Turnberry's course manager, George Brown, when we phoned him just before we went to press.

Three weeks before the big day, he was very happy with the way the course was looking. After a very dry May, Ailsa had been blessed with enough rain during the early part of June to put a smile back on 55-year-old George's face. Although he has a fully-computerised irrigation system, he says: "You can't beat the real thing".

Are your greens going to be as fast as Oakmont, we teased him?

"Bloody hope not," was his typically honest response. He says he'll be aiming for a speed of 9.5-10. "If there's a strong wind you don't want it more than ten, otherwise they'll be there all day."

George, who backed Jose Maria Olazabal to win the US Masters this year and Ian Baker-Finch to win at Royal Birkdale in '91, reckons the conditions will suit US Open winner Ernie Els.

The rough isn't as dense as it was when The Open last visited Turnberry in 1986, and the fairways and semi roughs are more generous. "You don't have to be deadly accurate, so it will suit someone who hits it a long way but sprays it about a bit."

Greg Norman might also receive a flutter from four-handicapper George.

BIGGA's president, Viscount Whitelaw, favours Seve Ballesteros to add to his Benson and Hedges triumph at St Mellion while Greenkeeper International's editor, Chris Boiling, is backing Scotland's own Colin Montgomerie.



City of Ely Golf Club's Peter Reed won the Ufford Park Golf Day, sponsored by Sisis, RE Rushbrook & Son, Fisons, Rhone-Poulenc, and Lockwood Grass Machinery. Thirty-five greenkeepers and golf-playing groundsmen took part in the event. A raffle raised £60 for Save the Children.

Your chance to win award

Entry forms will soon be available for the Environmental Steward Award. Although this award is aimed mainly at US golf course superintendents, the organisers have told BIGGA "for the first time, we are considering entries from around the world". Awards created to recognise greenkeepers who care for and enhance their local environments are given in three categories: public, private and resort. Closing date for entries is October 31 and the forms are available from Ceres Communications, 421 W Travelers Trail, Brunsville, MN55337, USA. Tel: 0101 612 8942414. Fax: 0101 612 8942423.

Parker Hart acquired by Printsphere

Parker Hart has been acquired by the investment group Printsphere which also owns Rigby Taylor Ltd. But Printsphere's group chairman, Bernard Hedley, says: "We intend that Rigby Taylor and Parkers will continue to operate independently."

The new managing director of T Parker & Sons (Turf Management), which recently bought the business of Maxwell Hart, is Jon Ryan. Mr Ryan, who worked for Parkers for 15 years during the early stages of his career, told GI: "I am delighted to be working again with so many old friends and look forward to building on Parker's traditional strengths in the trade."

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Icelandic greenkeepers look towards Scotland



Hannes Porssteinsson and Carol Borthwick, at Elmwood College

That well-known land of golf, Iceland, is making progress on the greenkeeping front. They are setting up the Icelandic Golf Greenkeeping Association and a second Icelandic greenkeeper, Margeir Vilhjalmsson, has finished his year's course at Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife. The first Icelandic greenkeeping student, Olafur Agustsson, is now working at Leynir Golf Club in the south-west of the country. It is one of 45 clubs affiliated to the Icelandic Golf Union, six of which have 18 holes.

A driving force behind greenkeeper improvements in the country is Hannes Porssteinsson, who played golf for Iceland as a junior and for the last seven years has been on the board of the IGU. His role during this period was to look after the junior section of the Union and he captained the junior golf team, which included Agustsson until he went to Elmwood.

Hannes became more interested in the greenkeeping

aspects of the sport when he spent some time working in England. It was then that his interest in importing grass seed to Iceland first emerged. Greens there have traditionally been allowed to develop from natural grasses, but about four years ago Hannes set up seeding experiments with imported mixes and during his trip to Elmwood he learned from Carol Borthwick, greenkeeping section head, explanations of the different grass mixes being tried out on the training ground.

During the visit Hannes pointed out that people imagine Iceland to be bare and rocky, but in fact it is a very green island and he is hopeful that some of the new mixes will mean that the Icelandic courses of the future are nearer to the quality of Scottish greens.

While he was visiting Elmwood, he finalised details of Carol's forthcoming trip to Iceland, where she will be guest of honour at the inauguration ceremony of the Icelandic Golf Greenkeeping Association.

America honours 'Masters'

During last January's BTME those members who had the opportunity of meeting Terry Buchen following his Master Greenkeeper award, will recall the pride he took in joining the august company of those now titled 'Master Greenkeeper'. Terry is based at the exclusive Double Eagle club in Galena, Ohio - a 7,100 yard design by Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish which has only 102 members with just 35 of those being local members. Amongst the national members are Ray Floyd and Chi-Chi Rodriguez.

Writing from America, Terry has enclosed photocopies from eight magazine articles concerning his receiving the Master Greenkeeper Certificate in Harrogate. Amongst the magazines are such well known titles as 'Golf Digest' and 'Golf World' as well as the GCSAA's own 'Golf Course Management'. High-

lighted is the fact that only eight Master Greenkeeper awards have been earned worldwide. Terry says that he has received at least 50 telephone calls from his peers and some 75 cards and letters from other people within golf. He was recently honoured with a dinner and presentation.

I have been saying for some time that the award of Master Greenkeeper status is the ultimate pinnacle for a greenkeeper and accords the recipient the highest respect from his peer group and increasingly the game. The publicity given to the award in America is another major step forward in the worldwide recognition of BIGGA and we are indeed lucky to have three outstanding ambassadors in America in Terry, Bil Montague and Bob Maibusch - Master Greenkeepers all.

Neil Thomas

He may be the mayor of Chippenham but the greenkeeper at Monkton Park still can't insure his machinery for theft.

He's the head greenkeeper of a nine-hole par 3 course. He's the club pro. He's a gliding instructor. And now he's the town mayor.

Mel Dawson has more hats than Gertrude Shilling. One minute he's changing the oil in his one and only ride-on mower, the next he's off to Windsor Castle to see his local Berkshire Wiltshire Regiment amalgamate with the Gloucesters and pick up new colours from the Duke of Edinburgh.

Wearing so many hats is not a problem for this 40-year-old father of two. He and wife Barbie have been at the course for 20 years and are used to working all hours to get the job done.

"It just means getting up a bit earlier," explained BIGGA member Mel. "If you were working 9-5, five days a week you couldn't do it, but we have a farmer's mentality. So far today we've only got half the fairways and greens cut because it's raining. If it dries up later we'll be out at 7pm or so finishing off. If there's work to be done, whether it's a Sunday, bank holiday or nine o'clock in the evening, we go out and do it. Because we're used to working like this we can fit in other things."

As mayor he is also chairman of the council and has to attend at least one council meeting a week.

As mayor he is also the first citizen of Chippenham so he has to open everything from a hockey club to a job centre to a school's fete. "It's good because you meet people who work hard in Chippenham who you'd never met before," he says. As a gliding instructor he spends most Sundays at the local club, where he has been flying for 20 years. His father was also a glider pilot and all four of his brothers are involved with aviation in some way.

As a greenkeeper, he has been looking after Monkton Park – which he promotes as 'The South West's Best Par 3 Course' – for 20 years and has been a member of BIGGA for four years. Last November he took on a YTS lad, 17-year-old Robert Jenkins (also a BIGGA member), to help him maintain the course and repair clubs. Barbie also does her fair share on the course. "I had a council meeting at 3 o'clock yesterday, so she was out there shovelling sand out of the trailer because we've got nowhere to store it," Mel told us.

But Barbie is mainly responsible for the snack bar and golf shop, and employs some casual labour to help her during the hectic, long summer days. Their 15 and 17-year-old daughters also lend a hand.

Satisfaction

Of all his duties, jobs and functions, it's green-keeping that gives Mel the most satisfaction.

"It's the thing I take the most pride in. Any greenkeeper likes his golfers to come up to him and say, 'The greens are looking nice today,' or 'The fairways are looking nice today'. It might only be 10 acres and a small golf course, but it's still nice when members come up and pay us a compliment.

"We do take a lot of pride in it, and because we take a lot of pride in it it's easier for me to get behind the counter and take £3 per round off people. If it's rained for four days and I haven't been able to do anything with it, I feel



Mower and mayor

guilty when people come to the shop to pay me money."

As you will have gathered by now, Mel is not a normal greenkeeper and Monkton Park is not a typical par 3 course. Set in 10 acres leased from the local council, it is kept to a very high standard considering the wear and tear it receives (including divots in the greens). There are 16 (a 17th is on its way) bunkers and holes which range in length from the 90-yard 9th to the 178-yard 5th. So experienced players – there are 50 club members – will have to use most irons in their bags. And it's not easy because most of the greens are small. The largest one is the 500sq yd double 8th/9th green. The total size of all the greens is about 2,500 sq yds – easily covered with four bags of fertiliser.

The fertiliser and the topdressing has to be brought onto the course by a Land Rover and two-ton trailer because it's in the middle of a public park and access is limited. Mel says he would like to topdress more often but because he has to have it bagged, it is too expensive. There is also the problem of how to apply it as most of the modern topdressing machinery is big and expensive.

The course, which is open 364 days of the year, 9am til dusk, used to be 14 holes all about 100 yards. Now the most obvious tees are still about 100 yards from the greens but there are also back mats on four holes for more experienced golfers, many of whom are also members of local 18-hole courses.

Mel and Barbie bought the business from Mel's boss, Frank Hill, a former touring pro, never dreaming they'd still be there 20 years and two children later.

Mel doesn't play much but holds the course record – 24. When he's played full-size courses he usually shoots in the mid-80s. "When I give up the gliding and council work I'm going to

work hard on my golf and get down to single figures," says the Mayor of Chippenham who got into politics through his father-in-law. When he married in '75, Barbie's father was the mayor. Later on, Mel was asked to get involved because of his contacts. He's been on the council for seven years and was deputy mayor last year.

But, even though he is mayor, he can't get his machinery insured for theft. This is because it is housed in a "remote" 25x10ft shed in the middle of the park and Mel put in a £3,000 claim last year (only his second in 20 years) when his Ransomes Auto-cert, chainsaw, strimmer and other equipment was stolen and his Sisis spiker was thrown in the nearby river (presumably because it was too heavy and the wheels had been removed).

Mel is trying to find a way round it, but at the moment he is taking much of the lighter equipment home with him. Taking on Robert may help because now it means that Mel and his landlords, the council, will have to meet health and safety standards, and that could mean a better, more secure shed.

"We've got decent machinery so we can get the golf course done quickly," says Mel, who wants to hang onto it. "We like to have the course look nice and play nice."

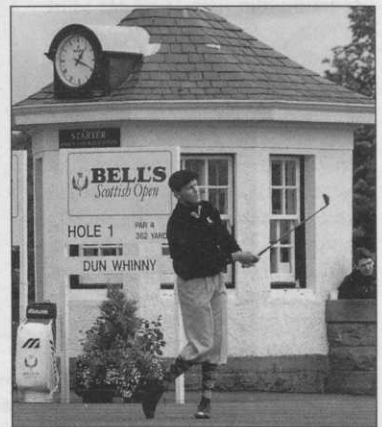
Just like any other normal greenkeeper.

MONKTON PARK EQUIPMENT

1 Sabo Kontinent 1200-3D, 1 Kubota G1700 ride-on mower, which doubles up as a utility vehicle, 1 Ransomes Super-cert greens mower, 1 Sisis Autoturfman spiker, which they use about once a month, 1 Echo strimmer, 1 Echo chainsaw, 1 Opitech Sprayer, 1 Cyclone fertiliser spreader, 1 old Amazone leaf sweeper, 1 Massey-Ferguson 135 tractor with gang mowers, 1 Land Rover with 2.5 tonne trailer. Irrigation is via two standpipes and 100m of hose.



Preparing for a major championship



The Bell's Scottish Open is only a four-day event, but the staff at Gleneagles have been preparing for it for 13 years.

Preparations began as soon as Gleneagles became a private company in 1981. Six years later it staged its first championship; now the greenkeepers at the five-star resort – all 34 of them – are set for their eighth event, with many top pros treating it as a warm-up to the Open Championship.

The Bell's Scottish Open at Gleneagles' 80-year-old King's Course has become part of the annual routine for the greenkeepers

Jimmy Kidd, Scott Fenwick and Chris Boiling explain how the staff at Gleneagles stop the Bell's from taking its toll on the King's Course.

there, but it has taken a great deal of effort to get to the stage where everything appears to run smoothly.

When Gleneagles became a private company the first thing they did was refurbish the hotel and invest in a new country club facility. Current owners Guinness have added other sports facilities (such as the Jackie Stewart Shooting School and an equestrian centre), and new maintenance facilities.

As well as transforming the workshops, they also transformed the greenkeeping management structure "to ensure a top quality golf product year round".

Each of the courses (four then but the new Jack Nicklaus-designed Monarch's replaced two of them) was given a head greenkeeper, deputy head greenkeeper, other greenkeepers and apprentices. The King's Course has eight full-time and three seasonal staff,

there are eight greenkeepers on the Queen's and 15 on the Monarch's. Each course has its own machinery and maintenance facility with mess room.

"This new structure immediately created a sense of responsibility and identity amongst the estates staff plus some very healthy competition between the staff and their charges," says Jimmy Kidd, the director of turf-grass management at Gleneagles Golf Developments.

While the new clubhouse, offices, golf shop and computerised golf reservations facilities

Preparing for a major championship

were being built, the King's Course was undergoing some fairly critical assessment to review strategy, playability, crowd movement, television cabling, tented village services, car parking etc.

An estates survey was commissioned and a grand plan with proposals and costings was presented to the managing director for approval. What they were looking for was: crowd comfort, good first and lasting impressions of the event, services such as TV and septic tanks to be hidden, first class car parking with shuttle service to the golf course ("as first impressions are of utmost importance"), and quality catering.

"All of these items are simpler to action and calculate for if you are designing a course today with championships in mind – not, as in our case, the first championship for 20 years and never before with an anticipated 50-60,000 spectators in year one, growing upwards to 115,000 as we're expecting this year," said Mr Kidd, who has been in greenkeeping for 34 years, 11 of which have been at Gleneagles.

Critical assessment of the James Braid-designed course revealed a weakness in length and strategy. Basically, it was an attractive resort course suited to the moderate player and local championships, not world-class events. So 12 new tees were built during the winters of 1983/84, lengthening the course from 6450 yards to almost 6900 yards. The strategy of the course was developed by improved teeing ground placement, taking into account Braid's bunkers which had been taken out of play over the years by the improvements to golfing equipment and maintenance practices.

A conscious decision was taken at this stage also to restore the King's Course bunkers to the original Braid concept: no large wastelands of sand but beautifully contoured grass faces 'gathering' the ball. "The genius of Braid was made apparent to greenstaff at our communications meetings whilst discussing the restoration – not one ounce of wind blown sand from his bunkers on our exposed location was apparent after 70 years of play and maintenance. The grassy swales created in front of them always took account of the prevailing winds," Mr Kidd points out.

Works proceeded on the greens, too, to get them up to European Tour event standard – fast, firm and true whilst holding a well struck shot. This proved difficult to achieve at first in 1983 because years of low investment, poor equipment and a lack of management structure plus over-utilisation of the course had seriously diminished the quality of the holes.

Modern equipment in the form of aerators was brought in to break down the layers of thatch, some of which were 3ins thick and affecting playability – especially during periods of inclement weather. A verti-drain unit with 8in hollow core and 12in x 3/4in and 1/2in solid tines with applied surface 'heave' or 'no heave' was constantly used to introduce air to the rootzone. Greens surfaces

By 1985 the course had been turned around and Gleneagles was ready to stage its first European Tour event, but the bid faltered at contract signing stage. "This was due to a variety of circumstances," explains Mr Kidd, "Not least of which was a poor slot in the ETPD calendar. The late September date was totally unacceptable to a resort golf course in Perthshire where optimum growing conditions only occur four months of the year – June, July, August and September. A major championship in late September/October would certainly not allow any recovery from crowd damage before the next spring."

With a slot for the Bell's Scottish Open established one week prior to the Open Championship, the King's Course, which had

maintenance route and during championship week for service and TV vehicles and as a walkway for spectators. But no-one wanted it to ruin the aesthetic appeal of the course. As it is, the roadway is difficult to see from the playing areas.

During the construction of this roadway, ancillary services such as water, sewage and television requirements were installed. The area designated as the tented village site was surveyed and a grid survey produced from which all future works could be planned. The most important first stage to any tented village facility is the provision of services: water, electrics, telephone and sewers. A set of services to suit all types of village layouts was installed, and these would allow simple connections during assembly of the tentage and hospitality units. Two 36,000 ltr underground tanks were also installed.

All car park gateways were widened to accommodate the PGA's recommended principle of two cars in, one out. Boundary fences were renewed and repaired for security and to maximise gate receipts.

The Gleneagles Hotel's own gardens department, which grows 40,000 plants in a 36,000 sq ft glasshouse, was instructed to prepare the floral decor of the tented village.

Once the first competition had come and gone successfully, all the departments settled into a routine, with the greenkeepers keeping their fingers crossed each winter and spring. With Gleneagles situated in a Scottish glen, there is a risk of prolonged snow falls with relatively high air and ground temperatures increasing the risk of snow moulds. "Preventative treatments of fungicide December to March are our only defence," says Jimmy Kidd, "But do not guarantee no incidence, resulting in poor spring conditions and little recovery prior to July at this altitude."

If there has been a favourable winter and comforting spring, preparations for the tournament commence with insecticide sprays for leatherjackets and a light dressing of organic nitrogen, applied to the greens during the 'false spring' in late March, to bring the grasses out of dormancy and protect what they have until

After the tournament

Within 48 hours of the championship, things are back to normal with guests, members and hotel residents carving up the course once more.

After the tournament, the greens are left for a week and may get an application of liquid feed "to kick them back in" according to head greenkeeper Scott Fenwick. They will be

overseeded in early August using a straight bent mix applied with a Sisis seeder. Then they will be topdressed and mowed at a higher height to protect the seeds. The fairways are overseeded using a fescue/bent mix.

After the tournament all the walkways are spiked, verti-drained and fertilised.

were topdressed during periods of active growth with sand dredged from the bed of the River Tay, which is similar to the sand found at St Andrews.

In conjunction with this operation, greens were droughted carefully to reduce the level of *Poa annua* at a controlled rate whilst encouraging the encroachment of bent and fescue into the putting sward.

Regular use of wetting agents, to aid capillary water movement and avoid surface tension during this phase of the restoration was most important, as was the avoidance of an out-of-control situation, with the *Poa* kill accelerating beyond the pace of the desired species encroachment. Fertiliser applications, little and often, hardening off the growth to attain hard-wearing grasses. "Greenkeeping working in harmony with nature," as Mr Kidd calls it.

already been described as "the finest inland links course", was made more links like with a fairway restoration programme that incorporated similar topdressings as the greens – medium/fine Tay sand.

Some 1,200 tons of sand were applied during the summers of '86 and '87.

Cutting regimes were directed and controlled by the use of hole-by-hole charts and on-the-ground contour lining to accentuate the topography of the course and improve the strategy. Each green was to be enfringed by "fat" grass incorporating greenside bunkers, each green approach was to be of a quality equal to the putting surfaces.

During the winter of '86/'87, an integral roadway system through the championship course was designed, costed and constructed. It was to be used year-round as a